

The Ghost

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Summary: The best goverment agent goes to work for the Taelons

The Ghost

> <meta name="Generator"> "Perfect. Za'hor will hate that and I don't love him much." said a grinning Raymond. \*\*

Disclaimer: I own nothing here.

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Prelude

The Taelons came to Earth four years ago, in the year 2028. They were met with joy. They accelerated humanities technology. We no longer have airplanes, we have interdimensional travel that can take us from one point to another almost instantaneously. The Taelons gave humanity almost everything we could ask for, there is no longer poverty or hunger, there is no such thing as a third world country, however America is still the strongest nation on Earth. Poverty has been decreased dramatically, and there is no more hunger. Many new religions have formed. All Taelons have a protector, who acts to safe guard them as well as acting as an aid. Most proctors are armed with a Ciber Viral Implant (CVI), which causes them to be extremely loyal to them, it also allows them the ability to have a scrrill implanted on their arm. The scrrill fires the energy of its host at any target, it is the deadliest weapon the Taelons possess. It has the power to act as a "stun-gun" or even vaporizes a target. The Taelons have always given us, never asked for anything in return. That was until recently. Of late, many "black" Taelon projects have been exposed, such as, the bio-soldier. A project in which a human mind is placed in to an android body. The android would then engage in combat against the feared enemy, the Juriandians. The Juriandians are genetic cousins to the Taelons but both sides wage war against each other, and the Taelons are losing. Another "black" project was the company Second Chances, they promised to restore your body to your

prime, however, during this process memories were implanted within your mind that made you loyal to the Taelons. All the while they have been amassing an army of loyal servants, a group named The Volunteers. They are armed with highly advanced Taelon weaponry and go to war against the Juriandians. The Volunteers also have an organic implant on their neck which increases all of their senses. Recently martial law was declared by the president to "remove the threat of the resistance." The martial law is upheld by the Volunteers and the skies are guarded by Taelon warships of immense power. The Resistance is an underground group devoted to stopping and even killing the Taelons. They were lead by former presidential candidate, billionaire, and business man, Jonathan Doors. The current president, Tomas Rosinworg, will do almost anything the Taelons tell him to do. This is how the story has started.

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Sunday January 21, 2032

4:30 AM Hawaii-Aleutian Time

Hawaii, One mile underground

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Ring, ring, ring called the Global Phone. One very tired secret agent code-named "Striker" who really is Raymond Luke Smite dragged himself, literally, from his bed to open the screen turning on the Global Phone.

"Yes, who is it and who ever has it better have a really good excuse for waking me at 4:30." Raymond muttered to himself. A white hared, blue eyed, man wearing square yellow glasses appeared on the screen. "Oh it is you, Bob, you better explain why you called me at 4:30 and it better be good."

"Man you are ugly in the morning, and oh ya it is very important that you come over her pronto. I can't discuss it on the phone, it is too sensitive." said Bob.

"Fine, fine be there in half an hour. I need to shower. Bye" Raymond said as he closed the screen turning off the Global. "Damn all this new technology, now I can't even get a good rest without being awoken. And what could be too sensitive to talk about over the single most secure phone line ever made by human or alien." After a good fifteen minute shower Raymond felt much better. "Lord, I hate hangovers. I knew I shouldn't have had all of that Vodka last night. But then it isn't every day that someone becomes a great-great-great grandfather, even if they don't know I am still alive." Raymond ate breakfast of three day old pancakes, cold orange juice, Alkaseltzer, and Advil. Precisely half an hour after being awoken he stepped into the interdimensional portal, saying "I hate these things" and was transported through space to his base.

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Sunday January 21, 2032

6:00 AM Alaskan Time

Alaska, Six miles underground

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"Hey Ray, how are you?" asked Bob.

"I am fine for a man with a hangover strong enough to kill a platoon of marines." said Raymond as he stepped out of the interdemsnoal portal and into his base. Since it was 6 miles underground all around him was solid rock. The walls were made of a scan restating clear plastic. There was a bed in the corner and in the center there was a ring of flat screen computers. In the right hand corner there were televisions used for briefings and of course just watching TV. There were many pieces of valuable art work, but there was nothing in the room more valuable than one single computer. This computer could process an almost infinite amount of data in less than a second, it was used to encode all of their information. It was called Unhackable Super Computer (USC) and usually for lack of a better name they called it "The Big Cheese". The USC was a one of a kind and was built by Bob and Raymond, they are the only two people in the world that understand how to create one. There also were a great many chairs, couches and tables scattered at random. Also there was a door, under the circle of computers, which lead to Bob's bedroom.

"I told you last night not to drink so much, but no you didn't listen to me. Now look at yourself, you should listen to me more often you could benefit from it."

"Look Bob either you shutup now and tell me why you woke me up or I beat you senseless and go home to sleep some more." Raymond said as he walked over to a large green chair and fell into it.

"Okay, okay I will tell you. The president has ordered you to report to the Taelon Mothership to be reevaluated by himself and the Leader of the Synod, Za'hor."

"What!" said Raymond as he jumped out of the chair and began to pace. "How did he find out about our project, he is not given the security clearance to know about us. And why should I listen to that spineless, Taelon loving, miserable excuse for a President! He is more worried about his approval ratings than national security. He can't even make a decision on his own without having an opinion poll to see if it will decrease his popularity!" yelled Raymond. He stood up and began to pace around the room.

Bob told Raymond "And that is not even the worst part of it, you also have to prepare a report on all of your activities for the president since this project is up for reevaluation to see whether or not it should be continued."

"This is not good, this is very bad. When do I have to meet with him and Za'hor?"

"Eight days, nine hours and 30 minutes." pronounced the computerized, mechanical version of Bob's voice.

"Great, just frigin', great. And why do you keep that stupid voice, you could get a much better one." Sighed Raymond.

"I like it."

"Oh well might as well start to get to work on this stupid report for those overgrown lumps of radioactivity on the Mothership and that docile, weak president."

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Sunday January 21, 2032

10:00 AM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership, Bridge

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"His name is Raymond Luke Smite, he works for the CIA and is their top operative. Raymond is 5'11", brown haired, green eyed, bespectacled until lately where he had a surgery that increased his vision to 20/10. Unfortunately we have no current pictures of him, for the last 10 years he has been working in total secrecy. The president himself did not know of his existence. He has one Ph.D. in quantum physics. We have no information on how he became a government agent. Raymond is 133 years old, yet he has the body of thirty-one year old. We assume that he used the company Second Chance to turn back his biological clock, but we cannot find any record of him doing so. There is no one with his appearance, DNA, or name in the records. He is an expert in hacking, biological and chemical warfare, tactics and can hit a two inch target from a range of 300 yards without a telescope. He was married but his wife died in a plane crash forty years ago. These are just some of his abilities, his government record is extremely extensive."

"This human is most interesting, I did not think it possible for a human to accomplish so many feats." Said Za'hor. "I believe I have a use for him, Mr. President, that is of course if you do not mind."

"No, not at all Za'hor. I strive to keep good relations with our alien allies' and I have no use for him. You seem to have a use for him so you should have him.", announced President Rosinworg.

"Then it is settled, when he comes the president will transfer his project to Taelon control.", said Sandavol.

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Monday January 29, 2032

7:50 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaskan Wilderness

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\*\*\* "I hate Alaska." Raymond said as he walked out of the 12 mile long tunnel, from his base, and into the preagreed spot in the middle of nowhere. "You think they could have picked a kinder place." The area appeared to have the beginnings of a blizzard. The sky was clouding over. The temperature was a \_delightful\_ thirty below, with wind-chill it was forty five below. "Shit, I can't stay out here for

more than twenty minutes. Raymond kept walking to reach the preagreed spot for pickup and waited. The spot was covered in three feet of snow, and had a great many boulders lying around. Almost two miles away there was a small mountain that looked like it was ready for an avalanche. He waited to be picked up by the shuttle, however it did not go as planned, five minutes later he saw a group of people coming towards him all armed. "Damn, I'm lucky that they told me to bring my gear." The gear Raymond was carrying was used for covert operations. He had a self-sealing, black suit that would absorb scans, it appeared to be a wet suit, with gloves and boots. His helmet was also black but it had a kind of Plexiglas shield, which was bullet-proof, and would display all sensor information in the form of a heads up display. The helmet sealed into his suit, forming and air tight seal. His backpack could scan the terrain for 2 miles in any direction and charge his weapons. The backpack was also the only source of oxygen for Raymond, it could change any substance that contained oxygen into a breathable gas as well as heat or cool the interior of his suit. His rifle was 2 and half feet long, and 4 inches wide. It was a nonreflective sliver, and contained a grappling hook and launcher, as well as a telescope that could take pictures. The rifle could be modified to hold many other weapons or tools. It fired energy that could either stun, kill, or even destroy armed tanks. Raymond took off all of his jackets and snow pants, leaving only a thin layer between him and the extreme cold. "Damn I hate the cold." He said. He then put on this suit, then helmet and finally the backpack, which heated him up to a kind 65 degrees Fahrenheit in thirty seconds, charged his rifle and activated his scans. All of this took precisely 5 minutes. It did not look good, a group of twenty, armed with AK 47 Assault Rifles, and one was carrying an energy pistol. When he used his telescope to view them the computer showed that four of them were known Resistance members. "Aw, great, just great. I really hate it when someone tries to kill me." Raymond looked around found a large rock went behind it, and called his main base twenty three miles away. Raymond turned on his secure communications system and called Bob who was still on base.

"What is it Ray, got lost or something.", answered Bob.

"No there are twenty people out here armed, four of which are known Resistance members, now if you be as so kind to scan them and the area for me. I need more intel on them and the area."

Bob ordered several government satellites to scan the area, which quickly changed their position and scanned the area. "Okay, done, I am sending you the solution."

"Thanks." Said Raymond as the solution was displayed on his helmet's heads-up display. "Do I have to kill them all?" He asked

"Nope, just five of them you can stun the rest, your gun does not have enough energy to stun them all." was the reply.

"I never understood that, my gun can kill 50 people at maxium charge, yet it can't stun more than 15 people., he muttered.

"That is because the energy nessacry is very hard to control and your gun can't hold as much of it safely."

"Thanks, off I go." Raymond moved his head out to take a look slowly, they were only 30 feet away. He turned quickly and fired off five

shots. "Damn missed must be the wind."

"They know you are there!"

"No really, that's why they are shooting at me. Shut up unless you some thing helpful to say." Raymond ran out from behind his rock shooting at the group with their bullets and a few blasts of energy landing around him. The snow underneath his right boot began to melt from a blast, causing him to slip, fall and drop is rifle. The Resistance members ran towards him, he however picked up his gun and shot the two that he had first missed. He was close enough to see all of their faces, most of which were covered by masks. One's face was partly uncovered, and he appeared to look like the Taelon protector, Major Liam Koncade. Liam was currently protecting the North American Taelon, Da'on. Liam was 5'10" blue eyed, and thin. Since he had only a brief glance, for no more than a second he did not believe it, attributed it to his imagination, which acted up and once made him believe he was seeing Elvis dancing in the middle of battle. He stunned Liam, and three other people in the front. He ran away because they were closing and Raymond didn't like being shot at.

"Ray, get your ass away from there that mountain is going to have an avalanche in three minutes if these gun shots keep up." Just as Bob said this a shuttle appeared at the Northern horizon flying in low and fast all the while shooting large "balls" of white energy. They quickly grabbed up the man who look like Liam and their other stunned men and ran off to the east. The shuttled was shaped like a cylinder, with four "legs" with prongs for jump-starting into interdimensional placed on it. Two wear in the front and two were in the back. Currently all of the prongs were only half elevated. The shuttle was about forty feet long and thirteen feet tall, the back two prongs were aglow with blue energy shooting out the back for thrust. The shuttle landed and the pilot stepped out.

"Sorry sir." The pilot was Chinese, odd because most of the people on the Mothership were of a European culture. She was 6'0" and very thin. The pilot was wearing a one piece body suit that was common on the Taelon Mothership. It was black with white curves running along its sides, within the white curves, where were shiny flecks of purple and other colors. The sleeve on her right arm was lose from the elbow down because she had a scroll on her right arm, which meant she must have had a CVI implanted in her brain.

"I am still alive. Let's hurry up and go to the Mothership, I want to get this over with."

"Yessir." He stepped into the shuttle and sat down in one of the three seats behind the pilots chair. He took off his helmet and turned off the heater in his suit. The pilot sat down and waved her hand across the front of the shuttle turning on the virtual glass shield.

"What is virtual glass, exactly? No one has ever told me." He asked

"It is a projected from of energy, which is shaped into what ever form necessary, sir."

"Oh, thanks." The pilot touched a place on the virtual glass with her

right hand and started up the shuttle's flying ability. She place her arms in front of her and where her hand were was a graphic of the shuttle and a bar going either up and down or right and left. The pilot raised her right arm and the shuttle raised as well, they went up 200 feet. The pilot plotted in the inderdimesional route to the Mothership. Just as she turned on the interdimensional drive there was an avalanche on the mountain.

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Monday January 29, 2032

8:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership

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After a short trip through interdimensional space they were near the Mothership. It was huge, about 4 miles long and 3 wide. The entire outer hull was made of virtual glass. The front of the ship was pointed, and the rest was curved like a Modeus strip. On the top loop there were two "holes" that lead to the shuttle bay were shuttles landed.

After he landed he was met by a man who was approximately 5'5", Asian, black hared and black eyed. "Hello Mr. Smite I am Sandoval proctor to Za'hor and a FBI agent." he said as he shock his hand. To do this Raymond had to put his helmet on the ground, Raymond also felt a very small prick in his palm, which he soon forgot about.  
"Why, are you wearing your gear and why are you late?" Sandoval asked as Raymond stepped out of the shuttle with his helmet under his right arm and the rifle is under his left arm.

"I am wearing my gear because several Resistance members tried to kill me and I am late because your pilot did not make the rendesyzous on time."

"Oh." was his only reply. Sandoval lead Raymond throughout the ship, never speaking. When they reached the bridge, Raymond had his first look at the leader of the Synod. He was almost impressed and slightly annoyed at once. Za'hor was six feet tall, had blue eyes that were shaped oddly, the pupils looked like they had part of them removed forming a shape like and hourglass. The skin of Za'hor was very white, almost like porcelain and he was wearing the clothes that all Taelons seemed to where when in their human form. They were blue but Za'hor's were a bright blue and like all Taelons he had lines running along the garment seemingly at random.

The bridge itself was the only thing that impressed Raymond. Za'hor sat in a chair that had a console at the end of each arm rests. The chair was a blue to match his(note: Taelons have no sex, but are usually used with the masculine form) clothing. It was made of long, thin, twisting poles, it appeared deceptively simply but was in fact extremely complex. There were many computer consoles scattered about the room, but along each wall was a virtual glass "pod". Inside of them were Taelons in there normal state. They appeared as nothing more than energy in a humanoid shape. The Taelons, in their original state, had colors of energy flowing through them; the colors were mainly blues and purples with an occasional white or green. There

were many columns in the bridge, they were very odd because energy flowed thorough each of the columns. Raymond was extremely impressed and it must have shown on his face because Za'hor smiled annoyingly as if he had won something.

"I see you find my ship very impressive." Said Za'hor.

"How impressive your ship may be sir is not what is being discussed here." said Raymond. As he said it Za'hor stiffened up slightly.

"That is most correct.", said the President as he walked out of the shadows near the columns along the walls and towards Za'hor, Raymond, and Sandoval. Za'hor stood up and stepped down from the pedestal that surrounded his chair join the president near Raymond. "We are here to find out whether or not I should allow your project to continue."

"I have prepared a 250 page report for you telling in detail of ever action I have every done in my official copatsy since I started the project. The report is so lengthy because of the SI wars, where I did about 25 missions during that time, most of which were intelligence gathering, but a few were of a different purpose.", said Raymond as he pulled the report out of a storage space in his back pack. He handed it over to Sandoval, who walked over to the President and handed it to him.

"Thank you, it was very kind of you to prepare such a detailed report.", said the President.

"What are the things you are wearing?", asked Za'hor.

"Oh they are my gear. I have them on because as I was waiting for your shuttle to arrive a group of twenty people showed-up, four of which were confirmed Resistance members, and attacked me. I stunned four and killed five."

"Most impressive." was Za'hor's reply.

"Thanks, but if I'm ever coming to the Mothership I will come through an ID portal."

"There are no interdimensoal portals on this ship." said Za'hor.

"Oh, well then next time I will be picked up near a major city."

"Perhaps, but we cannot assure that, we do not want your existence to become public knowledge. Thank you for the report, we did not expect it to be so lengthy otherwise we would have simply had you transmit it to us. You may go now." Said Za'hor as he flicked his right hand at the door as if shooing a fly.

"Yes, we will contact you when we have reached a conclusion on what to do with you and your program." Said the president.

"Wait!" Said Za'hor.

"I forgot to inquire exactly how you managed to use the facilities of

Second Chance without leaving any traces of you doing so."

"Oh I just sat down and had a talk with the computer. It agreed that since I was such an amazing, and important man that I should use it for free, and it let me in after hours so no one else would know. It was a bit hard to get to at first but it became easier as time went on to speak with it."

"You also did nine years with the SEAL's. You look thirty-three years old, which is younger than what the Second Chances techonogly can make people."

"Oh the computer was nice enough to put me in my teens, in fact I had to back to high school, drop out and join the Marines, then the SEAL's."

"Very odd, I would hope that you do not do something like that again, otherwise it will gravely affect our decision concerning your project. That will be all, you may leave now." And again Za'hor flicked his hand dismissing Raymond.

"Thank you," Raymond said as Sandoval lead him out of the bridge and back to the shuttle bay."

"Why are we walking, I just noticed that you have some sort of elevators in the wall, why don't we take that.", he asked

"Because, I was told to lead through the Mothership. However if you wish to we can use the elevators.", replied Sandoval.

"If I didn't want to then I wouldn't have asked." Sandoval lead him over to an elevator and put him in and said Shuttle bay. The door closed just as he was asking how Sandoval would come. Ten seconds later he was at the shuttle bay and Sandoval came out of a different elevator twenty feet away.

"Here is your shuttle, Have a safe trip.", he said. As Raymond stepped into the shuttle he noticed that it was the same pilot as the first trip. She lifted off and left the Mothership without saying anything. They went into interdimensional and appeared over the same spot that they had taken off from.

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Monday January 29, 2032

8:15 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaskan Wilderness

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"Could you please fire your weapon at the ground. The avalanche covered the entrance to the tunnel that takes me home."

"Yessir." She fired her weapon and destroyed a large portion of the snow.

"Again." She fired once more, revealing a large metal door. "Okay you can just put her down over there and I am free to

go."

"Yessir."

"Thank you." He said as he walked out of the shuttle. There was no response to this. He walked to the doors and felt the shuttle rising. He turned just as she went into interdimesional. "Well better go home now." He opened the door by typing in the code and having his DNA scanned.

"Warning tracking device. Accessed Denied." cried out a mechanical voice.

"Oh, shit. How dare they put a tracking device on me. Computer, locate tracking device."

"The device is located in the center of your palm, implanted 5 millimeters below the epidermis."

"Great, gotta cut it out. I hate this damn cold." Raymond said as he pulled out a knife and made a shallow cut across the center of his palm. His knife hit a hard object, which he quickly pulled out. The device was round, about 4 millimeters across and blue. Raymond took the device and through it as far as he could. "Now, computer lets see if I can get in now."

"Access Granted."

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Monday January 29, 2032

8:15 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska, Six miles underground

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"Hello Ray, how was the trip." said Bob

"Cold." Raymond stepped in to the doors, which closed behind him and on to a small, five man train. The train immediately started to move at 200 miles per hour. Several seconds later it stopped 11 miles from the base itself. The only way in our out was to go through and interdemsional portal. Raymond walked up to the right hand wall and placed his hand 2.5 meters above the ground. A coffin-like drawer came out. Raymond stripped, placed his clothing in a bin that was next to the coffin and lied down in it. Several scans were done on his body, when the scans came to up to his cut hand, the imdeantatly order many nanoprobes to the area which healed the cut almost immediately. The scans then covered his entire body looking for a locator, or anything that should not be there. It also scanned his face, hands, fingerprints, blood type, body temperature, weight, height, eyes, and DNA in an attempt to ensure no one could enter without being authorized. If it was found that the subject was not Raymond or Bob, then he would be vaporized. The scans of course found that he was Raymond. With the scans complete, the coffin slid through the wall and came out in a small room with an interdimensional portal and his clothing was there as well. His clothes had also been scanned for any unknown objects. Raymond dressed, dialed the proper guardits

in to the interdimesonal portal and was teleported to the base.

"Hey Ray."

"Hi, Bob."

"How did it go?"

"Well, we might be now working for the Taelons, but besides that it was fine."

"Great, well atleast we now have an excuse to get some better equipment."

"Ya, sure. Do you really think the Taelons are really going to use us for anything important."

"They will. Otherwise Za'hor would have simply had our project ended right then and there."

"Oh, so he thinks we will be of some use to him. Can't image what he needs us for."

"Well I don't care, cause either way we should get some better gear."

"Ya, well they are not coming in here, I don't want anyone finding about the USC. It is our secret weapon,"

"I agree."

"Good, well now all we can do is wait for them to respond. I am going to sleep."

"Fine, I will go surfing the net. Maybe there is some new info on Taelon projects out there."

"Well if there is you will find it." Raymond said as he walked over to one of the couches. lied down and fell imeadtely asleep.

"How does he do that. Oh well, time to go surfing."

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Thursday February 3, 2032

9:15 AM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska, Six miles underground

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"Well, the president has sent us a message, care to bet on what it is about Raymond?"

"No thank you I'd rather not."

"Good cause I would have won. Looks like you have another meeting on the Mothership, to discuss your next mission and your new boss,

Za'hor, will be asking you for what ever type of equipment you want."

"Great, just great."

"Well look at it this way we will be getting some new equipment."

"When do I have to be there."

"Five hours."

"Great they always give me plenty of time."

"Better get ready, they will be picking you up via a portal in New York."

"Well atleast they learned from last time."

"Does it say how I might be picked up and where."

"Yup, you will enter an ID portal, which will be diverted so you may get off at a Volunteer Base, enter a shuttle and be taken to the Mothership. It also says not to bring any gear."

"Hmmm, how fun. I'll go get ready."

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Monday February 29, 2032

2:15 PM Eastern Standard Time

New York City , Grand Central Station

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"Please place your hand on the screen." called a man in the uniform for an ID manager. Raymond placed his hand on the screen, and felt the tingle as the scanner indetified his DNA and matched it up with a list of all the passengers scheduled to travel that day. The computer had him named Mr. Daniel Smith a 34 year old banker who lives in Maine. "Welcome, Mr. Smith."

"Yes, hello. Where do I go now, it is my first time using an interdimensional portal."

"Just step in between the prongs and stand on the pair of feet painted on the floor, sir."

"Thank you." Raymond did as he was told and waited till the ID portal could hold no one else. He turned on his Gobal and sent the message. The ID portal was activated and there was the normal gathering of energy behind him and then he was shoot through space to the Volunteer Camp.

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Monday February 29, 2032

215 PM Eastern Standard Time

Unknown, Volunteer Camp

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"Hello sir, please come this way." said a young brown hared, green eyed attractive woman in the uniform of a Volunteer Captain. The uniform shirt was all black with silver lines running along it, and at every major organ there was a circle of the sliver material, her right sleeve was cut short allowing her to fire her scrrill. Her pants were also black and loose fitting. On the right side of her neck there was a flat implant that curled up behind her ear, which allowed her to have extra sharp senses. She lead him through a maze of gray walled, plain corridors with doors on every 30 feet.

"Don't think much of your decorator."

"We prefer not to have many distortions around, it makes it easier to work. Besides this is the military, we were never known for our style." She stopped a seemingly innocuous door. She stepped out into the sunlight of the outdoors. "This way sir." She kept leading him out side for quite some time until they reached a shuttle. "Step inside here, it will take you to your destination."

"Thank you." As Raymond stepped into the shuttle it began to lift off automatically. "Wow, this was not what I had in mind." Raymond quickly sat down in the pilot's chair, which was lucky because they jumped into interdimensional space, at that exact moment.

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Monday February 29, 2032

2:20 PM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership

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When Raymond and his ship, popped out of ID space a Taelon voice greeted him. "Hello, if you would please change your course and heading to match these quartidents, you will be put on a route to our shuttle bay."

"Well, I'd love to, but I can't fly this thing."

"Oh, then I will have to take over the steering. Please wait."

"Fine." Raymond felt his shuttle turn to the left and begin to fly towards the Mothership's two "holes" were the shuttle bay was. He landed and was again met by Sandoval.

"Come." was all he said. Sandoval again led him though the ship only this time he went not to the bridge but to a room with four holographic projectors. Za'hor will be assigning you your next mission." Sandoval turned and left. Za'hor walked in five minutes after Sandoval left.

"Greetings, Mr. Smite. I have a mission for you, it involves learning how to fly a shuttle."

"Interesting, may I ask where I will be flying to."

"Here" Za'hor activated one of the holo-projectors, it displayed a planet that looked

like Jupiter, only larger. "This planet is located in the constellation you call Horologum. It is located 56 light-years from earth. When humans discovered the planet it was named Iota Horologii. You will be going to one of its moons." A moon was circled by blue. "You will be entering a base here and planting explosives after breaking their computer encyprotion. The base well guarded and will require a great deal of skill to enter undected."

"How will I evade their scans?"

"You will be receiving a modified shuttle, designed to create almost no scanning profile, their is also a comet which will be passing into the system, in two months, you will be hidden behind the comet and when it passes the moon you will fly on to the moon."

"May I keep the shuttle."

"That will depend upon your performance. Major Liam Koncade will train you in how to fly the shuttle, and agent Sandoval will assign you some new equipment as well as briefing you further. Sandoval will be take you to the Taelon embassy in Washington DC where Major Liam Koncade shall starting with you flying lessons." Sandoval walked in as he finished saying this. Sandoval turned one another holoprojector, while Za'hor walked out the door.

"This base is controlled by a species called the Juriandes, they are currently at war with the Taelons. The capture of their communication codes will allow the Taelons a massive advantage over the Juriandens." Sandoval paused, turned and looked at Raymond as if waiting for surprise to this statement appear on Raymond's face, nothing showed. Sandoval clicked up a rotating image of a creature, it looked human but, without hair and had dark brown dots under its eyes and along the back of its head. "A Juriandin is about 5'7", they are humanoid and have glands in their hands which can fire energy blasts capable of killing a human. The base is guarded by several lasers and missile launchers which can easily destroy a shuttle, its scanners reach out 300,000 kilometers in all directions and perpetrate a great deal of the way into the nearby planet. To compensate for this you will be ridding in on a comet, which will pass within 100 kilometers of the moon. Your shuttle will be modified with increased weaponry as well as having a new stealth techonogly." Sandoval brought up a picture of his ship. It was dark gray, long thin but tall and had a great many curves, the picture was animated so it showed the interdimensional prongs being resealed into the interior of the shuttle. "The weapons are based off a Juriaden techongly. The shuttle's stealth abitlies relay on how it can allow energy to flow through it unimpeded. It can however be seen on a visual scan unless, a certain function is used, which requires so much energy it cannot be used for over one minute and needs all available energy making you almost dead when using it. The ships engines put out almost nothing, making it unlikely that your energy signature will be tracked. The weapons can destroy a normal shuttle

quickly, and you have a weak tractor beam on board.", Sandoval walked up to Raymond and handed him a disk. "On this their is a map of the base, and details on its abilities. You will be given several explosives you will use to fly off of the comet as well as some light armor, with very limited stealth abilities, and some weapons. These items will be given to you once you have completed your training with shuttle. You will be brief again before the mission to refresh your memory and supply you with new information. Please come this way." Sandoval lead him again to the shuttle bay where he took a shuttle down to the Taelon Embassy at Washington DC.

\*\*

Monday February 29, 2032

2:40 PM Eastern Standard Time

\*\*

\*\* Washington DC, Taelon Embassy\*\*

The embassy was not much shorter than the Washington Monument and was made entirely of a green material, it appeared to be 200 feet wide and had a great many twists and turns, seeming to spiral upward into the tip, which formed the top. He was met by Major Liam Koncade and Da'on, the Taelon ambassador to North America. Da'on was in the clothing that all Taelons seemed to love, and Liam was in a black leather trench coat, a black shirt with bluish lines running down it similar to the ones on Da'on's shirt, and black pants.

"Greetings, Mr. Smite. I am Da'on, and this is my proctor Major Liam Koncade."

"Hi.", Liam said as he shook Raymond's hand.

"He will be training as a shuttle pilot.", said Da'on while Sandoval lifted off in his shuttle.

"I would like to start now, but Da'on has a press conference in Quebec now, perphas we shall start tomorrow at 8:00 AM."

"Certainly, may I come with you to your conference."

"I do not see why not." Said Da'on.

"Thank you."

"Come this way, to the ID portal." Liam then lead them off into the Taelon Embassy, where they entered an elevator, which took them almost to the top of the embassy. Liam placed Raymond and Da'on inside the portal, and typed in quadrants on the keypad nearby.

\*\*

Monday February 29, 2032

2:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

\*\*

\*\* Quebec City, Canada\*\*

The ID portals engaged and Liam, Da'on, and Raymond all appeared in Quebec City. The room they were in was brown and decorated with various flags from many nations and the symbol of the Taelons. It appeared very similar to human DNA with a blue arc going up with a purple arc underneath, but with either end above the ends of the top arc. It also had three tiers of seats, all filled with a center podium sounded by four seats forming in a semi-circle around the central podium there was three men seated around, with one women nearest to the podium on the right. Their were Volunteers standing about, as always, guarding should anyone attempt an attack on Da'on.

"Please take Raymond here to a good seat." Said Da'on.

"Yessir." The Volunteer who had spoken was brown hared and eyed with the kind of face your could find in any city or town. He lead Raymond to a center seat in the second tier of seats. Da'on mounted the podium with Liam standing behind him to his right scanning the crowd. The people in the seats near by stood up and greeted Da'on.

"Greetings, I am overjoyed to see so many people here.", Da'on said after he finished greeting all the delegates nearby. "We are here today to discuss how to further unify the Taelons and humans." Their was appulse for this and one of the male delegates stood up to speak and Da'on moved back. Raymond was not interested the speeches, he only came to see Major Liam Koncade, to him it looked like he was defending, but did not quite have the stance of someone who fought in the SI wars. Their was some more applause and the woman stood up to speak. She made a speech, none of which interested Raymond, he always thought politicians wasted time, and caused war, to him no solider ever wants war or ever starts one. Da'on went up again to speak, but this time a man in the crowd, on the tier below him and to the left side, stood up.

"Look at all of, your letting yourself be manipulated by \_them\_.", he yelled. He pulled out what a gun and started to aim at Da'on, but Liam had knocked him down and covered him with his body. Everyone had stood up and people several were screaming. Their was the whoosh as a volunteer fired the rifle they carried. The man's body flared red with the dissipation of energy, for only a second and the man fell down dead. With the this over Da'on stood up and calmed everyone down, then asked everyone to stay and continue with the meeting. The meeting continued without any further interruption, but Liam appeared much more protective of Da'on. The meeting went on for another two hours, and Raymond dozed on and off. After it was over Liam came and took Raymond and Da'on back thorough the ID portal to the Taelon Embassy.

\*\*

Monday February 29, 2032

3:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

Washington DC, Taelon Embassy

\*\*

"Thank you, for bringing me to the meeting, Liam, if you would be as so kind to fly me home." asked Raymond.

"Certainly, I need to enter my rest period now." said Da'on. Liam lead Raymond out of the Embassy and into the shuttle parked nearby. Liam was silent until they had lifted off and were ready to jump into ID space.

"What are your coordinates?", he asked. Raymond typed them into the shuttle's navigational computer and they jumped.

\*\*

Monday February 29, 2032

3:49 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaskan Wilderness, Six Miles Underground

\*\*

Liam dropped him off on the ground with a reminder to be out here at eight AM tomorrow for the start of his training. "Thank you.", yelled Raymond as Liam's shuttle leapt up and went into ID space. Raymond opened up the entrance to his tunnel and went home.

"Hey Ray you are on the news." exclaimed Bob as Raymond stepped out of the ID portal.

"What?" said Raymond as he feel into one of the couches in front of the television screens.

"While you were dosing at the press meeting, where Da'on was attacked, some news crews wanted to know who you were, coming out of an ID portal with Da'on and Liam Koncade so they tried to resach you, but found nothing and are now showing you at your glory." The TV screens were tunned to some news channel and showed him asleep snoring lightly.

"Perfect. Za'hor will hate that and I don't love him much." said a grinning Raymond.

"You are a very evil man."

"Good, also I would like you to research Liam Koncade. I think I have a picture of him in my private files, and check my sensor logs from my recent encounter with the Resistance."

"You think he is Resistance?"

"Not likely, but who ever he is, he doesn't seem like the Liam Koncade I saw in the SI wars."

"Well I will get right on it."

"Oh, Bob I will be trying to get you to join me on my next mission. It involves some hacking and I could use your help."

"Thanks Ray!"

"Welcome, I am going to pursue a different course with Major Liam Koncade. Also, the Taelons are at war."

"What!?"

"Yup, Sandoval told me that while he was briefing me on my next mission. I think it would be wise if you searched the Taelon database for information on this. Here is a disk that Sandoval gave me. He said it has information regarding the Taelon's enemy. They are called the Juriadens." Raymond said this as he gave Bob the disk for his pocket.

"Wow. This is amazing news, I'll get right to work on this." Bob turned to his computer and began to type away.

"Thanks, I am going off to track down Liam Koncade. See ya." Raymond walked to the ID portal and went to his underground home in Hawaii."

\*\*

Monday, February 29, 2032

3:49 PM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership, Bridge

\*\*

\*\*\* "How could he! The imbecile!" yelled an outraged Za'hor. "He knows that we do not want his existence to become public knowledge!"

"Perhaps we should remove him." said Sandoval.

"No, we need him. He knows that too, he did that to spite me. The boldness of the man, the intelligence, I admire him for this, though I wish he didn't do it. We need to come up with an excuse for his existence."

"Perphas he should be a Taelon protector-in-training, we can easily make a record for this. It would all be true so if the media asks about his record we wouldn't have to lie."

"Yes that would be a suitable punishment as well. This will force him to appear in public so often that he will become tired and regret that one unfortunate appearance." said a smiling Za'hor.

\*\*\*

\*\*\* "I will get right on making a record \*\*\* for him. When do you want to schedule a press conference to announce this?"

"Oh, within a week or so, we don't want to disappoint the media."

\*\*

Monday, February 29, 2032

3:53 PM Eastern Standard Time

Hawaii

\*\*

Raymond stepped out of the ID portal and went into his room and changed into clothing that any dumb tourist would wear in Hawaii. He looked like a fool with large oversized sandals, a loose Hawaiian shirt, loose bathing trunks and a bag swung over his shoulder. His body was slightly tanned, an effect Raymond worked at constantly. Raymond grinned in the mirror, pleased with the effect it created. He hacked into the portal security system, using a password he and Bob implanted years ago and reserved a spot in the next scheduled ride to Washington DC. He left his room and went into an elevator which opened up into the warm Hawaiian afternoon. Raymond walked out onto the beach and swam around for an hour. He then went into the city, catching a ride on the bus. When he got into the city he found a bathroom and changed again, this time to a respectable looking business man and took the portal to Washington DC.

\*\*

Monday, February 29, 2032

5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

Washington DC

\*\*

Raymond began his search for Liam. It certainly wasn't easy, he just couldn't ask where a Taelon protector was. He started with the news stations on his Global, looking for any event that Da'on might be at today. Nothing. He tried searching for Major Liam Koncade. Yet again, nothing. "You would think that such famous and influential people would be in the news." He went to one of the local libraries and tried searching the Internet and Internet2, again he found nothing. After three hours he was ready to give up and try later. Ring, Ring, Ring, that was his Global. Bob appeared on the screen.

"Hey Ray. You done searching? I have found some interesting stuff but I don't think it is what you are looking for."

"Ya, I'm done. I'll see if I can catch a portal back to Hawaii."

"I have you reserved for the nine o'clock portal to Hawaii, in Grand Central Station."

"Thanks, that gives me some time to eat." Raymond went out, found a Mc'. Donald's and had a quick meal. He caught the nine o'clock portal to Hawaii, changed, and got on the bus to the beach again. Raymond went off into the woods and took the elevator down, and the portal to Alaska.

\*\*

Monday, February 29, 2032

9:01 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Hi, Ray. I found some very interesting things about Major Liam Koncade. He did serve in the SI wars and was the only survivor besides his Commander in an ambush caused by some bad intel you gave them." said Bob.

"That's it!" Raymond exclaimed. "I knew I knew that name, it had been bugging me for awhile. Check my private files for information on him, I probably have something on him. What did you get on the Taelons and their private war?"

"Nothing, the Big Cheese is still working on cracking the codes to their main computers, while leaving no trace, of course."

"Good, I don't think the Taelons are inclined to let me know everything about this."

"The disk had some very interesting information though."

"Like?"

"It tells us all about everything from the composition of the base, to the ship types that will be stationed there."

"Wow, they are actually begin honest and open, a first."

"Don't I know it."

"Incoming message from Synod Leader Za'hor." Announced a mechanical voice.

"We accept it." said Bob. Feeling slightly guiltily Raymond and Bob turned towards a computer screen and a camera.

"Hello, Mr. Smite. In order to explain your unplanned appearance at the press meeting we are announcing you as a Taelon protector in training. I hope you can mange to conduct yourself accordingly when ever you are in public." Za'hor ended the communication.

"Great, just great. It will be impossible for me to search for Liam now."

"You can just go to him, you are in training so why not just get some training from him."

"Good point."

"I will start searching about Liam Koncade."

"I will look into my private files, you check the net." Raymond and Bob worked for two hours, finding a great deal of information. As was their custom they never told each other what they had found. "Bob I

am going home to sleep. See ya in morning."

"Bye." Raymond went home and fell asleep.

\*\*

Monday, March 1, 2032

7:30 AM Eastern Standard Time

Hawaii

\*\*

"Hey Ray, wake up!.", yelled Bob over the communication link.

"Go away.", mumbled Raymond.

"Sorry but I think you should see this."

"Fine I will be over in a few minutes." Raymond showered, changed, ate and took the portal to Alaska.

\*\*

Monday, March 1, 2032

7:45 AM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Ray, Liam was assigned to a nuclear command center, and never had leave to go see his commander's funeral, in fact this tells me that he never even saw any Taelons." Raymond walked up to a computer and typed in a few keys, bringing up his research from last night.

"Bob look at this picture."

"Wow, that is not the Liam Koncade we all know, unless he had surgery."

"He didn't, I checked."

"Ray, you have an 8:00 appointment with Liam Koncade in Alaska above tunnel three." said Raymond's Global Phone.

"Well time to go and learn to fly. Should I confront him about this?"

"No, how about putting a tracer on him."

"Very good idea, just like what they did to me." Bob went over to his room and came back out with a small button-like device.

"Here is the tracer, we can follow it from my computer."

"Great, thanks. I better go now." Raymond stepped in to the ID portal and typed in the coordinates for tunnel three.

"Bye."

\*\*

Monday, March 1, 2032

7:55 AM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Better get going might be late." Raymond stepped into the coffin-like drawer and it opened on the other side of the wall where the train was waiting. He got in the train and it went off. Raymond went into his compartment on the train and pulled out his jacket and some snow pants, which he quickly put on. When the train arrived and he got out just as a shuttle appeared from ID space. "Exactly on time." When it landed Raymond noticed the shuttle was very odd. It had two pilot chairs, and it was twice as wide. The virtual glass had a bar down the center, splitting it into equal portions that were just as big as a normal shuttle.

"Hello Raymond." said Liam as he turned off the shuttle.

"Hello, why is the shuttle like that."

"It is a training shuttle. I can override whatever you do at any time and we share control over it. It also makes it easier for me to show you how to fly this shuttle."

"Oh." Raymond stepped into the shuttle and sat down in the second pilot chair.

"Okay, you turn a shuttle on and off by touching it here." Liam hit a spot directly in front and waved his hand upward to the right. And so it went on with Raymond coping what ever Liam did, until one o'clock when Raymond said he would like to eat lunch.

"Sure, I know a good restaurant nearby." said Liam, and since they were ten miles away from New York city they went out for lunch. The restaurant was a small classy affair, generally not the type of thing that Raymond would go to for lunch. Raymond and Liam sat down at a small corner table. "How did you become a government agent?"

"I was first a scientist and was developing a quantum computer for the CIA, but we ran into problems which made it difficult to create one, and now we know it is impossible. One day a terrorist tried to kidnap me."

"Tried?"

"Yes, tried I nearly killed him as I recall and the government then saw it fit for me and my whole team to receive training in hand to hand combat. I was greatly proficient in it, the teacher remarked on a report that I was a born killer.' After this I took up other types of training while working on the computer, and eventually became extremely proficient at it. The Taelons came and since they already had computers just as good as what we were trying to develop, and

they showed that it was impossible for any large quantum computer to be developed. I was out of a job. Then Second Chances came along and I hacked their system and used their facilities to become young again. I then went into the CIA under an alias." Raymond finished his story as the waitress came to ask for their orders. After the waitress left Liam began to talk.

"But it says that you were in the SI wars and several other engagements."

"Yes I was. I was usually a hacker, but sometimes I would infiltrate a base."

"Why did the government let one of their best scientist go on such a dangerous mission."

"They didn't, as I said I was never assigned to infiltrate a base. I was told only to hack into their security systems and find troop movements, and disrupt supply lines. I used that to break into a base because if I were to eliminate it at a time the other hackers could break into another spot and I could launch a virus into their system."

"Stupid."

"No, it was fun."

"Perhaps, but didn't the government try to stop you?"

"No, they needed my help and I only went out when I had no other choice." Liam and Raymond continued talking. Eventually they moved on to another subject, the Taelons.

"What is it like now that the Taelons have put you out of business."

"They have? I still am working for the government, still doing the same work only now it is called diplomacy. How about you, how do you feel?"

"I like it. My job definitely has its perks."

"Excuse I have to go to the bathroom." Raymond got up and as he walked by Liam he dropped the tracer into his jacket pocket. Raymond came back a few minutes later. Liam and Raymond fished their meal later and went back to their training.

\*\*

Monday, March 1, 2032

9:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Ray," said Bob as he stepped out of the ID portal.

"Hey. I bugged him."

"Good, I have been following you two."

"Where is he now?"

"He is there." Bob pointed at a map of Washington DC on one of the television screens with a blue dot moving around. "He is headed towards a church, the St. Peters church."

"Why is he going there." Suddenly they lost the signal. "What, how did that happen?"

"I don't know, that thing I gave you can broadcast from over 100 miles under solid rock, there is no way, unless something blocked the signal or it was destroyed."

"I think I will go take a look at that church. Can you make me a map of exactly where he went."

"Sure, I will have done in the morning."

"How is the Big Cheese doing?"

"Also will be done tomorrow."

"Tomorrow will be interesting."

"Yes it will." Raymond went back to his house in Hawaii after spending a few hours talking with Bob.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 2, 2032

7:10 AM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Hi Bob." said Raymond after stepping of the ID portal.

"Hi. I have the map finished. You will not believe what the USC has come up with."

"Try me."

"Well it put it lightly, the Taelons are at war, and losing. In their quest to win the they killed millions of \_species\_."

"Wow."

"There is more. The base you are going to is not a small unimportant base, it is a center for research on how to create an ID drive, well behind enemy lines. Since a Taelon shuttle was recently lost they assume the Juriandes have it and they will be finding out how to create an ID drive, so you are to destroy the entire moon."

"Wow. I better get ready to go and have my flying lessons with Liam." Raymond's day was pretty much the same as the one before. Except that

when he was dropped off in Alaska he didn't go home.

\*\*

Monday, March 2, 2032

9:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Hey Bob do you feel like giving me that map and scanning the church, so we can go take a little look-see at where Liam went."

"Sure. Here I have some stuff for you, it will help you scan the area and pass any security systems."

"Good. Where is the nearest ID portal to there?"

"It is about one block away."

"Okay, where is the stuff?"

"In my room, I'll go get it." Bob went into his room and promptly returned with a backpack. "All the stuff you need is inside, I am sure you know what is what."

"Of course." Raymond went up to the ID portal and Bob typed in the quartdents on his computer and Raymond was off.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 2, 2032

9:05 PM Eastern Standard Time

Washington, DC

\*\*

Raymond flicked open his Global and said "Bob send me a map to the place."

"Sure." Raymond walked to the church, glancing at his Global infrequently. Once he was inside he sat and prayed for a few minutes and then went back and followed the route that Bob told him to. He ended up in a room with a rock wall. "I am scanning the area with government satellites. That is odd, there is a cavern or something the scans can't penetrate. Looks like we hit the jackpot."

"Ya, the scanners I have say there is something behind this wall. I can't get to it and if I destroy it I might set off an alarm."

"Watch out someone is coming your way." Raymond took one of the mini cameras out of his bag and attached it to the ceiling so it could watch the rock wall and ran out. He turned on this Global and watched as Liam Koncade walked up to the wall hit a part of it, the wall then split and he had his thumb scanned and an elevator came up and then

took him down.

"Well at least we know where he is."

"Ya, I think we should stop and you come home."

"Ya, I will come back again, but not today." Raymond left the mini camera there and he placed some small and inconspicuous scanners in the corners of the room. He left and went back to Hawaii, then to Alaska.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 2, 2032

9:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Those scanners you put are picking up some interesting stuff, but what the camera saw is even better." Bob brought up a picture of an Asian man walking out of the elevator with Liam.

"Who is that."

"That is Auger, also known as Markous Cole. He has quite a record of hacking. He cut a deal in 2030 with the government, so his record would be wiped clean and he would testify against his former partner, who is still doing time in a sensory deprivation tank. He was thought to be a member of the Resistance, but there is no proof. He owns the bar Flat Planet CafÃ" in Washington DC," said the computer.

"Interesting, what would Liam be doing with him," said Raymond

"I know Auger, or I used to know him."

"You did?"

"Ya, I worked with him on hacking some government computer, easy stuff really. He was famous for his credit chips that he made for awhile."

"Sounds interesting, I think you should go pay a visit to the Flat Planet CafÃ"."

"He might recognize me."

"But Liam will not, you don't even exist anywhere."

"Ya, it will be fun. Perhahs I could talk to Auger for awhile, find out some information."

"Yes, you should go now."

"I think I will." Bob got up from the computer screen and walked over to ID portal

and left.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 2, 2032

9:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

Washington DC, Flat Planet CafÃ"

\*\*

\*\*\*The place was loud, that was the first thing Bob noticed, the second was all the people were wearing something bright. He felt slightly out of place in his dark pants and shirt with a black leather overcoat on. He went to the bar, getting funny looks all the while, and ordered a drink. He began looking for Auger, he saw him go down a corridor. Bob followed Auger with a drink in his hand after paying for the drink. The corridor took him to a small room with a single couch, which Auger was lying down, resting. Bob silently walked over to the table put his drink down and approached Auger. "Hello Auger." Bob reached inside his jacket and pulled out a small tube.

"What, who are you?" Auger got up and looked around.

"Don't remember me? I thought not perhaps if you saw me it might jar your memory." Bob walked into the light squeezing the tube in his hand which expanded to form a blade.

"John, aren't you still in sendep prison."

"Did you know that this blade can cut through anything, yet it can't be picked up on a weapons scanner. Very useful."

"Please, don't kill me John. I am sorry I only testified against you to save myself. Please don't kill me."

"I might kill you, I might not."

"Please don't kill me. Why are you out of Sendep prison, you were going to do ten years."

"I turned traitor, like you did at my trial." Bob advanced a pace and raised the blade slightly above his head.

"Don't kill me please." cried Augar, to Bob it looked like Augar had almost wet himself.

"You are really get scared easily."

"I don't exactly get used to have people threaten me with blades."

"I see. Since I can tell you don't work out of here I think you should take me where you do work."

"Okay." Augar went out of the door and Bob followed after closing his blade and putting back under his jacket ready to be drawn again. They then went to the church and when the rock wall opened Auger ran his

hand down a DNA scanner and they went into the elevator. They got out of the evaluator and walked down a hall into a room extremely similar to Bob's in Alaska. There was a ring of computer screens in the center and couches laying around, but Auger's room seemed to have a great deal of art work around, some of it looked very expensive. The walls were also covered in panels of what he assumed were scan resistant plastic.

"Nice, looks almost like my place."

"It does?"

"Ya, I have almost the same setup, only I have quite a bit more computing power."

"Hello, Auger. Who do you have with you?" asked a hologram.

"This is Bob, my former partner."

"I definitely don't have one of those."

"They help with interaction, and can be quite useful as a partial AI."

"I prefer to do my own work."

"You always did."

"I see you still enjoy collecting art, if you call it that."

"This collection is one of a kind and worth several billion dollars."

"Hmm, shows what I know about modern art. I like it down here, how about you

let me come down here often."

"Okay."

"Don't worry, I will not kill you. I only wanted to kill you when I saw you again,

but now I don't think I could. I give you my word."

"Thank you." Augar was visibly relaxed because when they were partners if John gave his word, then it was final, he always followed his word. Bob began asking Augar random questions about how he had been and what he had been doing. Eventually Augar relaxed to the point where he sat down. As Bob got up and left he put a small probe into the couch.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 3, 2032

6:45 AM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"How was last night?" asked Raymond the next morning.

"Great. Raymond I have to tell you this. You know how Auger partner was put into a sendep tank?"

"Ya."

"Well that is me, I cut a deal with the government after a year in one of those things."

"Wow, learn something new every day."

"Ya."

"How did he react to seeing you."

"He was scared but he was happier after I told him I was not going to kill him."

"Oh."

"I told him I would like to visit sometime, and I had best be let in."

"Perfect, how would you feel about meeting Liam Koncade."

"Good, are you going to introduce him to me?"

"No, you are going to pay Auger a visit when Liam is down there with him."

"Oh, I see. That way I can find out what they are doing together."

"Yup."

"I can't go searching anymore. Za'hor has just made me a Taelon protector-in-training.'"

"What!?"

"Ya they have just announced it on the news, I even have a whole new record, most of it is real, but some is not." Raymond turned on the television, which showed Za'hor at a press conference.

"I am sure all the media is curious as to who was at the recent press meeting with Da'aon in Quebec City. It was a Taelon protector-in-training. His name is Raymond Luke Smite and he is being trained by Liam Koncade." announced Za'hor.

"Why do you need another Taelon protector?" called one reporter.

"In case of an a death, or another Taelon might be coming to Earth permanently and will need a new protector." Raymond shut off the television.

"That sucks, now you will be attacked by the media no matter where you go."

"What is even worse is that my record says I live in Nevada, so that is where I have to live. The Taelons have lovingly prepared a house for me."

"Oh, sounds like they want to watch you."

"I know, and I don't think they would want to have an ID portal in my home, and even if they did let me they would tap the records and find out where I have been going."

"Hmm, that is a problem."

"I will just have to bring my own ID portal. Do we have any more of the temporary portals?"

"Yes, many. But they can only last for two jumps."

"I know. We will be using a lot of them too. I bet they even tap my phone system."

"This is going to suck."

"Yes it will, though I am surprised that Za'hor came up with something so sadistic to do to me."

"I certainly will not underestimate them again."

"Nor I, could you come and help me pack."

"Sure." Raymond and Bob went to Raymond's house in Hawaii and began to pack up his things."

\*\*

Tuesday, March 3, 2032

7:15 AM Eastern Standard Time

Hawaii

\*\*

"Now since the media will be wondering as to why I have bags I will need a story." said Raymond.

"Simple, you just got back from a vacation in Hawaii."

"Of course. I wonder if the Taelons will have my house filled with food and clothing to make it look as if I was living there."

"Probably." Raymond and Bob finished packing and then took all the clothing and went back to Alaska. Raymond brought all of the luggage with him to meet with Liam. Liam picked him up and instead of starting him on teaching right away, he went to Nevada.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 3, 2032

8:05 AM Eastern Standard Time

Nevada

\*\*

"Here is where you will be living," said Liam after emerging from ID space.

"Nice house." They were right over what Raymond hoped was his property. He was above the slope a mountain. The house was large and well built. A few mountains away he could see what might be a ski resort. Liam took the shuttle down on a pad placed not too far from the main building. Now that they were on the ground Raymond could see that the house was three stories tall and painted white with a brown roof. There was a main building connected by a covered walkway to what looked like a guest house. "There is no way I am rich enough to afford this."

"In your new record, which I suggest you learn very well, you are extremely rich because of a mission you completed. The government as well as some foreign nations paid you well for it."

"What did I do?"

"You disabled half of the enemy's production of any battleships or submarines in the end of the SI wars."

"I did do that, but I was not paid that much. No foreign nation paid me for it."

"Well you just got paid."

"Thanks."

"I had better show you around. The media is expected to arrive here and have a small press conference with you at about ten o'clock."

"I hate the press."

"Better get used to it, you are going to be in the public eye for a while."

"How are they going to explain me going off to destroy the Juriadain base?"

"Simple, you are going on a mission, testing your ability to fly a shuttle." Liam reached down and picked up a jacket. He then turned off the virtual glass and stepped out, gesturing for Raymond to follow. As Raymond and Liam went inside, Raymond noticed several cameras planted around the building, not all of them were facing outward. Liam took Raymond on a tour of his house and explained the rooms as they went. The interior of the house was modern, there were flat screen televisions, the thin light chairs that were popular this month, and there were two sub levels, both of them were hard to access and hidden from plain view. However the most important thing to Raymond was that he had virtual glass projectors all along the house. In fact one wall was made exclusively of it and provided a

wonderful view of the surrounding territory.

"This is where I will hold the press conference," said Raymond as he entered the room.

"This is a very nice house."

"Why, at least you can go somewhere. I am trapped here unless someone comes and picks me up, I have no ID portals."

"True. Well let me tell you this, tomorrow you will be training with the fighter that you will be flying."

"Why, isn't it the same."

"Pretty much but there are a few things that apply to a normal shuttle that doesn't exist in yours and vice versa."

"Okay."

"I suggest you prepare your self to be attacked by the media, they most likely will be rather rude."

"Damn press.

"Better get used to it. I have to live with it every day. " Liam left leaving Raymond with a map of the house. Raymond spent his time exploring and unpacking. He set up his room to his satisfaction and then entered his computer system. While he was looking through its files he noticed an oddity. There was an infinite loop in the code. It apparently gave him protection from any programs that would try to monitor his actives. The code did look like Bob's programming, but yet it was slightly different. Raymond began wondering who this house really belonged to. At about nine-thirty Raymond began to prepare for the media. He put on a suit and set up some a podium and some chairs in the virtual glass room as he liked to call it. The media began to arrive in helicopters and shuttles, taking off and landing quickly. He waited at the door greeting and directing the media to the room he had set up for them. After about ten minutes all of the media was here. Raymond entered the room and took the podium.

"Excuse me sir, is it true that you are a future Taelon protector?" asked one man as soon as he took the podium.

"Perhaps, I'm not sure if a Taelon will need a protector, and they do choose every protector personally as well as oversee their training." The meeting went on with the reports asking questions that either were already answered or just plain dumb, like what was his favorite of fish. After this was all done the media left and an hour later Liam came by.

"I see you handled that rather well." he commented as they were in Raymond's living room.

"I suppose. You know that there is a hanger that I could use to store a shuttle."

"Yes I know, that is where your fighter will be stored. Also what are you going to name it."

"Good question. Perphaps I will call it Hammer Two."

"Why two?"

"The first plane I had was destroyed when I crashed it into a battleship."

"Not a good legacy."

"Worse actually, I had crashed into one of our own battleships."

"Bet they weren't happy about that." Liam stayed for awhile talking to Raymond about nonimportant matters, eventually putting him at ease. "You know this house used to belong to a hacker called Auger."

"Really?"

"Ya, the Taelons had to pay very dearly for the house."

"I should hope so, this house is amazing."

"Well I had best be going. Nice seeing you."

"Good bye." Raymond walked Liam out to his shuttle and watched as he lifted off. "Wonder why he told me that about Auger." Raymond spent the rest of the day looking around his house for the best place to set up his ID portals. He finally decided on the lowest sub level in a dark corner. Raymond took the long prongs out of his suitcase and attached it to the control console. He turned on the portal and left for Alaska.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 3, 2032

2:21 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

"Hey Ray", said Bob as he stepped out of the portal.

"Hey yourself."

"You have a meeting with Za'hor soon, I hope you know. He had just called your house. You will be receiving your new shuttle and getting some briefing."

"When exactly."

"Umm, about 20 minutes."

"What?"

"Ya you had better get back to your house now. Also take these." Bob handed him some temporary ID portals. Raymond grabbed them up and left. "I love doing that to him." said a grinning Bob.

\*\*Tuesday, March 3, 2032\*\*

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2:23 PM Eastern Standard Time

Nevada

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\*\*\*"I hate it when he does that." said Raymond. He was busy hiding the ID portals in as many different places as he could. He worked for a few minutes until he heard a shuttle land outside his house. He hurriedly grabbed a coat and rushed out to meet the person. He got into the shuttle and it took off. They flew up and ID jumped to the Mothership.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 3, 2032

2:35 PM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership

\*\*

\*\*\*"Greetings Mr. Smite." said Za'hor as Ray walked into the bridge.

"Hello."

"I am sure you are wondering why you are here, and why you were called on such short notice."

"Yes I am."

"Well that is very simple, we have changed our planes. Since we have noticed a large buildup of Juriadin warships in a sector that is near one of our bases, we can assume that they are about to attack. You will be stopping them."

"Excuse me but wouldn't a fleet be better than a single ship?"

"Yes it would, however while you are doing this our fleet will be taking advantage of a slight decrease in their defenses to attack not only the base that you were assigned to attack but several other bases."

"Yes that makes sense, but how will I destroy a fleet with only a single ship?"

"Do you remember how the SI wars ended?"

"Yes, there was a quantum vortex which killed hundreds of thousands of people and due to this crushing loss they were weakened. Then when the Taelons arrived they were so weak that they would agree to almost any conditions to end the war."

"That quantum vortex was not an accident. We caused it."

"What!? How could you it was five years before you came to Earth."

"Yes, but it can be created at a great distance. You will be using a similar weapon. It has more damage effect and is also very concentrated. This weapon will be added to your ship and used to destroy the vessels."

"How exactly will I be deploying this?"

"That is very simple. All Juridan ships have one critical flaw. Their engines have tubes that allow them to maneuver. You will be cloaked and fire a cloaked targeting system that will go up into the engines of the ship and allow you to fire the weapon into their engine system, which will certainly if not disable then destroy the ship."

"I can only stay cloaked for one minute, how will I do all this before that minute is up? I can't fire a weapon in cloak because the ship does not have enough energy."

"A great deal of your energy is spent on life support systems and masking them. If you remove them then you will stay cloaked for longer. To overcome the energy problem you will be given two extra power generators designed to power this Mothership."

"Wow."

"You will be leaving in five days. I suggest you use that time to become accustomed to your ship and to review the battle plans. Sandoval will show you to your craft."

"Come this way", said Sandoval. He lead Ray though a maze of corridors and eventually down to a room that looked like the shuttle bay only a great deal smaller. Inside of it was a single gray vessel. It had curves jutting off at the oddest and least expected angles. There was not visible means of propulsion. Sandoval took him over the ship and introduced him to a scientist that was working on what looked like the Juridain armor from the disk Sandoval had given Ray.

"Hello Sandoval." said the scientist. "Is this who will be using the ship and the armor?"

"Yes," said Sandoval. "I would like it if you explained this to him." Sandoval left.

"Well, this is your space suit and armor. It will shield you from the vacuum of space and can be attached to your ship to create a minicloaking field. It has some built-in weapons, which you will not be needing."

"Wait, a minute. What is your name?"

"No one here has names."

"Oh."

"Also since your ship has been modified with two new power coils you will be able to cloak for much longer."

"How much longer?"

"A lot longer." This noncommittal reply sent shivers up Raymond's spine. The Taelons were sending him on what was nearly a suicide mission and they didn't even know how long his only defense would last. "Also the weapon that is being added to your ship will take up a great deal of space you will not have as much room to move around, even though that the ship was designed to have new weapons added."

"Exactly how much room will I have."

"Here let me show you." The scientist took Raymond to the ship and showed him the inside. "This is where you will be." The space he showed him was half the size of a normal shuttle cockpit.

"What! That is way too small."

"Most of the space is taken up with the targeting systems you will be firing into the Jurianden ship."

"Oh, how long will I be in there."

"You will have to spend over a full day in there. Most of the time you will be asleep due to a drug we will give you. Come this way we will be getting you used to the space suit. Then the man who brought you here will take you away for a tactical briefing." He took Raymond back to where he was working on the space suit and began to show him how to enter it, turn it on, use the weapons, and deactivate it. After he finished this, Sandoval came and took him to the same room that he had his first briefing in. Za'hor was waiting for him there and began the briefing as soon as Raymond had sat down.

"In case you think that this is a suicide mission it is not", said Za'hor as soon as he sat down. "This mission is very well planned, even though it is slightly rushed." Raymond made no response to this. "These are diagrams of all the ships that will most likely be in the fleet." Za'hor handed Raymond a disk. "If there are any other ships they will look very much like the one's in the disk. You will be exiting ID space well inside our lines. You then will fly at maximum velocity until you reach the scanning range of the fleet, then you will enter a light cloak where you will only be hidden from scans. Once you get within a visual range of the ships you will activate a full cloak and fire as many of the targeting packages into the maneuvering tubes of the Juriadian ships. There will be a display in your ship which will tell you when you have to move away because your energy levels are too low. If this happens you will go outside the scanning range of the ships, without firing and recharge your energy cores. The recharging should take about five minutes at most, you will then continue firing the targeting packages until all ships have them. Once this has happened you will move out of visual range, decloak, recharge, and fire the weapon until all vessels are destroyed."

"This does not seem like a very smart plan."

"It is a very good plan, it is also the best we can do with such

short notice."

"It still seems crazy to me."

"It does not matter how you feel about it, you will do this or you will die", said by an enraged Za'hor. Not only did the sentence frighten Raymond, but also how Za'hor said it. He had never even heard of a Taelon become angry, he had always thought they were above such human emotion.

"I suggest that we leave now", said Sandoval. Sandoval lead Raymond out of the room. "Now you can see what your position is I suggest that you do not attempt to argue with Za'hor, of late he has been a little touchy. I have all the necessary data for you, I think that it would be best if you left now with the data and did not come back till summoned." He lead Raymond back to the bay where he had first seen his new ship. Along the way he gave him a disk with more information on it. When they reached the bay only the one scientist who had shown Raymond how to use his armor was there. The scientist gave Raymond one more ability to his armor. It could collapse into a device about the size of his backpack. Raymond dismantled the armor, entered the ship and began to lift off. As he was lifting off he noticed that the ship was much more responsive than the shuttle he had been training with, and that it could corner better than cars. He began to fly towards the virtual glass window that was opening towards space.

"This certainly is a very nice ship." He entered the ID quadrants for a jump to a flat plane in Alaska. "Let's see how the weapons work." He jumped into ID space, and again his ship surprised him. Normally an ID jump from the Mothership to Alaska took about a minute, but for him it did not take more than twenty seconds.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 3, 2032

3:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

Alaska

\*\*

He targeted a large boulder in the open plane and fired a normal energy blast. "Dear God", exclaimed Raymond, not only had the shot disintegrated the boulder but it had scorched a large patch of Earth, about twenty feet in diameter, around the boulder; also snow for many yards was melted by the blast. "Amazing, that wasn't even on high power. I had better see if Bob could scan the ship and see if it is just the new power cores added, or if the ship was always like this." Raymond had planned on testing the ship more; however, the demonstrating he had just seen was more than enough, he did not wish to test the strong beam weapons and the projectiles. He feared causing massive damage. He left for Nevada.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 3, 2032

3:01 PM Eastern Standard Time

Nevada

\*\*

Raymond landed his shuttle not on the pad outside, but rather in the garage that appeared to be designed for it. He went inside and down to the basement where he called Bob telling him about the ship, Bob asked if Raymond would scan the ship and send him the results back. "Ray, the new power cores are definitely not the reason that the ship is so amazing, and engine can only handle so much, increasing the power input is not the reason that the ship goes so fast. These engines and weapon systems are on a different level than the normal shuttle. In fact a great deal of the technology appears to be a Taelon-Human-Juriaden hybrid."

"But I thought that Taelon and Juridan energy was incompatible."

"It is but human tech must act as a kind of buffer or binder."

"Huh, interesting thought that the Taelons need us."

"Ya."

"Bob, I have some bad news for you. The Taelons have reassigned my mission and I will now be leaving in five days. I definitely can't take you on this one, it is all fighting and the ship's cockpit is half the size of a normal shuttle."

"Oh I know, I have just received full access to all of the Taelon files."

"And?"

"There are some other interesting facts in there, one of them being that the chance of success for your mission is less than eighteen percent at best."

"I knew they hated me, but I didn't think they wanted me dead that much."

"Yes, well they really must want you dead. Also there are about two dozen different tracking and monitoring devices in your ship, so I would not suggest coming over to see me."

"Oh I won't."

"I bet on it. See ya, I want to look through all of the Taelon's files, should be interesting."

"I bet, see ya." Raymond turned off the Global. He went back up the stairs and studied the battle plans and general information of the Juriadens for the rest of the day. He found some disturbing information, such as he would have to shoot the targeting package, which is about two and half feet wide, one and a half feet tall and one foot long into targets that were only three and a half feet wide and two feet tall, without the aid of a computer targeting system because the Juriadens might detect that. He also would have to be at least 120 meters away or the Juriadens would defiantly detect his engines.

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Wednesday, March 4, 2032

7:35 AM Eastern Standard Time

Nevada

\*\*

"Incoming message from the Taelon Mothership," was the first sound Raymond heard as he woke up.

"Accept," announced Raymond. A screen came out of the ceiling and Za'hor's image appeared upon it.

"Hello Mr. Smite it is nice to see you so well rested and alert," said Za'hor's image.

"Nice to see you to Synod Leader Za'hor," sweetly replied Raymond.

"You are to come to the Mothership in fifteen minutes for a continuation of the interrupted briefing yesterday as well as some combat simulations." Za'hor's image disappeared from the screen.

"Thanks for the advance notice. Better get going."

\*\*

Wednesday, March 4, 2032

7:50 AM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership

\*\*

"Hello, Mr. Smite," said Za'hor as Raymond stepped into the bridge.'

"Greetings," was all he had to say in response.

"We will begin the briefing again. There is now one more objective for you to complete."

"Which would be?"

"You must disable one of the Juriadain fighters, we need to see how they compare with the shuttles and your craft."

"Can't I do that by seeing its flight."

"No, you must disable one."

"Okay. How will I bring it back with me, since tractor beams don't work in ID space and the ship could spin away from me."

"You don't. All you must do is disable the craft, board it, kill any remaining crew on board and take it several thousand kilometers past the front. Once you do that you will simply let it drift, to be picked up by some other Taelon vessel. Also if at all possible you will also disable the crew onboard, this however is extremely unlikely that this will be possible, so you need not risk your life to accomplish this."

"If I do disable the crew, then what?"

"You will put him in a stasis, by forcing him to inhale from the tube that you will use for the same purpose, but you will be woken up. The Juriaden will then be taken to a containment cell in the Mothership."

"This seems like a very dangerous mission Za'hor. Why do you not use some other person who has more practice with the Juriadens, if is there any."

"Are you saying that you don't feel as if you can't complete this mission?"

"No, of course not. But it does not seem very sensible to send someone who has never seen a Juriaden, let alone fought one, on such a dangerous and vital mission."

"There are no other qualified persons, you are the only person who could complete this mission."

"Oh, that is very flattering. What happened to the other people, if you had any?"

"There were never very many, most of them were killed and a few were captured."

"Not a great record."

"No, Mr. Smite that would be very bad," said a saddened Za'hor. "Sandoval will continue your briefing elsewhere." Sandoval took Raymond and lead him again to the same room.

"Because of your new objectives, some more modifications will be made to your ship."

"Such as?"

"You will have a virtual glass containment field installed, more room to the cockpit, and you will be allowed to bring your gun with you. It will be capable of killing a Juriaden after a few modifications." This statement ended Raymond's curiosity, because he was wondering why he had been asked to bring the gun with him to the meeting. "If you would be so kind as to give the gun to the scientist here, who will have it modified by the time this briefing is complete."

"Gladly." Raymond gave the gun to the scientist who had just entered the room.

"You now have a very precise route to follow. This will allow you to dodge the newly arrived scanners."

"Scanners?"

"Yes, they are a kind of Juriaden ship that can only scan, their range is extremely impressive."

"Can they detect me in cloak."

"Not a full cloak, but there is a chance that one a partial cloak the interference caused by so many scans will allow your ship to be discovered."

"Oh."

"I would recommend that you follow this course as precisely as possible, deviation of more than two meters could cause your ship to be detected."

"Why can't this simply be uploaded to the autopilot."

"It will be, but you should be able to steer the ship this precisely, and be familiar with the route. Now for the next three hours you will be in a simulator, learning this route and how to properly fight the Juriadens."

"Why don't I like the sound of that?"

"Because it will be extremely unpleasant." Sandoval lead him out of the briefing room to another room. It was totally white and curved, with a single shuttle pilots chair in the center. "You will first learn to fly the route, then have many dogfights, and after that you will be learning to fight a Juriden mano-a-mano." Raymond began and the words "extremely unpleasant" didn't do this justice, it was more like pure hell. After three hours in that he would gladly cut off his arm just to end it. He was killed nearly half of the time as well. The Juridens strength was so much stronger than his that the hologram could literally throw him across the room with a flick of his wrist.

"That was very good," said Sandoval.

"You call that good, I was killed nearly half the time."

"Forty three point four percent of the time in fact. You should now that most people get killed over ninety percent of the time."

"Wow."

"Yes you did well, but don't get cocky. The Juriadens will have many surprises for you, they always do." This comment gave Raymond a bad feeling, it seemed as if Sandoval was sad about a loss. "Now it is time for you to leave, here is your gun." Sandoval gave Raymond his gun and they left for the shuttle bay.

\*\*

Wednesday, March 4, 2032

11:30 AM Eastern Standard Time

Nevada

\*\*

\*\*\*Raymond spent the next few days learning everything he could about the Juriadens and went to the mother ship occasionally for more training. Eventually the time came for him to leave.

\*\*

Sunday, March 8, 2032

5:30 AM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership

\*\*

\*\*\*"I wish you luck and hope that you return soon," said Za'hor as Raymond was preparing to leave.

"Thank you." Raymond stepped on to his shuttle, waved good-bye and left.

"Do you think he will complete the mission," asked Za'hor.

"If anyone has a chance it is him, he is the best trained and did the best in everything."

"I hope he lives."

"So do I."

\*\*

Sunday, March 8, 2032

5:30 AM Eastern Standard Time

Hammer II

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\*\*\*Raymond turned the Hammer II towards Earth. How beautiful it looked from space. He wondered if he would ever see Earth again. "Time to get on with the mission." He turned his ID drives on, attached the gas mask, and fell asleep.

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Monday, March 9, 2032

8:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

Hammer II

\*\*

Raymond awoke with a light head and a feeling that he had had some horrible dream, but hadn't the technician said that dreaming would be impossible due to the gas. He turned on his autopilot and began the

long journey to battle.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 10, 2032

12:00 AM Eastern Standard Time

Hammer II

\*\*

"We have come within 100 kilometers of the full cloak zone," said the Hammer II's computer. Raymond assumed manual control. He flew in towards the fleet, about a minute later he activated his full cloak. A small bar showing energy drain appeared upon his control console, the computer hypothesized that with the current energy demands they would have to recharge in about ten minutes. He flew in towards the ships, their sheer size shocked him. "Amazing, the ships must be ten times what I had thought they would have been." The ships easily over two times the size of the Taelon Mothership. They were also astoundingly different than any Taelon ship.

Taelon ships are organic and seem alive, however these were metallic and dead. They were a dark shade of green and the light from their running lights didn't seem to help, rather it made the ships look even more ghostly. They cause Raymond to shudder and wonder what kind of species would create ships that were so ghostly, so frightening. After a single moment of fear he began to start his mission. He went in through the formation and towards the largest and centermost ship. "If they detect me I will be dead in nanoseconds." Raymond went towards the back of the ship and as he was instructed. He fired his targeting package. To the enemy sensors and vision nothing changed, but to Raymond this was the moment of truth.

"Targeting package will reach target in five, four, three, two, one. Package is within the target, all secure."

"Thank you Lord." Raymond had spent the last five seconds sweating for fear that the ship might move and the package would hit the ship, they would certainly notice that. He targeted the other maneuvering tubes and fired. They made it as well. Raymond continued this until he had to recharge so he flew out of visual range and deactivated his full cloak and recharged. He managed to put a package in nearly every ship except for the dozens of constantly moving small fighters and shuttle crafts. Raymond pondered how to hit them. He simply couldn't fire a package at them, since they were constantly moving and he did have a finite supply. "Perhaps if I were to draw them towards me and then detonate one of the ships, that would destroy most and probably even disable some." To do this Raymond had to reprogram his computer so that the main weapon would only fire at one target, not all.  
"Ship, is it possible to fire the weapon in ID space?"

"No," replied the computer.

"Well there goes the easy way, I will simply have to avoid getting shot by hundreds of ships long enough to draw most of the fighters and shuttles into one area, ID jump out and destroy the ship. This should be fun." Raymond goes out of visual range and again charges all of his power cores. He then turns on his ID drives and jumps into

the middle of the enemy formation.

"Warning: Enemy has sighted the ship suggest immediate evasive maneuver," screamed the ship.

"Disengage the vocal interface," said Raymond. The sensors registered a massive energy increase. Raymond began to dodge the shots even though he couldn't be targeted. They were amazingly accurate, and every time they were getting closer. "Damn it, why aren't the fighters closing!" Raymond was straining himself, not to mention his ships abilities to the maximum in order not to be hit. After performing a fourteen G turn he decided that rather than simply dodge and running the risk of falling unconscious he should fire back. Every shot he launched seemed to have no effect on the Juriaden ships, their armor was amazingly tough. "God, damn it! They must be made of something stronger than virtual glass," screamed Raymond. "Well, I am giving up." Raymond opened a comm. link to the ships and said "Nice knowing you. See you in hell." Raymond jumped out of attacking range, activated his full cloak, and fired his weapon. The explosion that came was so powerful that for a second it looked as if a new star was born. The shockwave destroyed dozens of other ships and nearly sent the Hammer II flying back to the Taelon side of the front. "Holy mother! Computer how powerful was that blast."

"That blast was capable of destroying a planet."

"What!?"

"It would easily destroy Earth, if directed at it."

"Dear God protect us all if the Taelons use that on humanity." Raymond then began the process of methodically slaughtering all of the remaining ships with the targeting package in them. The whole process made Raymond sick, he nearly threw up several times. "This is disgusting." Raymond hated this process and nearly stopped, but he remembered Za'hor offering to kill him so he continued the slaughter. Explosion after explosion. Most of the ships were killed now and those that were left were in no condition to fight, they could barely maintain life support. Now there was only the matter of choosing one of the many helpless fighter crafts. Most of the crafts were dead with no life signs, so Raymond believed that he need not destroy the ships but the computer reminded him.

"Mission objectives state that all ships must be destroyed, please comply."

"Damn computer." Raymond continued to destroy every ship except for a single moderately damaged fighter ship. The ship is not totally destroyed and is still capable of life support. The scanners said there were two living Juriaden on board. Raymond flew toward the ship and boarded it.

The ship was entirely green inside. The lights were dimmed and Raymond had trouble seeing. "Whoosh," was the first sound that Raymond heard as he stepped on board. It was the sound of a weapon firing. Diving to the ground he heard another whoosh and saw the floor nearby exploded. He tried to return fire but saw no body.

"Shit, they either cloak or move really fast." Raymond stood up and

began to run using his suits sensors and the sensors on board the Hammer II to find out where the Juridans are. Again Raymond felt a whoosh go bye and saw part of the wall disintegrate. "Damn it where are they." He dived down and fired. From then on Raymond fired as he went hoping to hit whatever was firing at him. "I can't stand this armor, it makes it impossible to move." Raymond disengaged the armor and began to move around the craft freely. Even though it was very small there seemed to be a great many corridors that looped back upon themselves. "Where are you, come out where ever you are." Raymond dived down and a bolt of energy went through the space where his head had been.

"Bam bam bam." Raymond had returned fire.

"Orrrrgh," was the sound that he heard, he must have hit something alive. He walked toward down the corridor and in the shadows lay a body. It had was wearing armor that was exactly like that of his own, however it was a Juriaden. "Orrrrgh," it said again. Raymond bent down toward it.

"Whoosh." A bolt of energy lanced out from the darkness and nearly killed Raymond.

"Thunk." Raymond felt himself hitting the wall and his left arm was severely burned. Raymond activated the beam cannon on his gun and nearly cut a hole into space. He limped back toward the injured Juriaden and saw that he was still alive but his partner was definitely dead. Half of the armor on his chest was missing and his head had come off. Raymond grabbed the Juriden and dragged him back to the Hammer II.

"How do I get the armor off his head? I can't leave him in it, if it is anything like my armor then it has weapons." Raymond gave up on this problem for a while and pulled out the medkit. Raymond grabbed some of the nanoprobes and ordered them, not to heal the wound, because healing a would this size quickly could cause the new flesh to turn to cancer, but to shut the blood vessels so they would stop bleeding. "Raymond then grabbed one of the pressure badges and put it on. "Ahhhhh. God damn it!" The bandage had done its job to well and now his arm wasn't bleeding but hurting a great deal. His eyes had clouded over and he had nearly passed out. Next came the anesthetics. He put enough in his arm to deaden to the point where it didn't hurt to hit the wound. "God that hurt." Raymond went back to the Juriaden and wondered what to do. He picked up his gun, turned the beam cannon on but kept it on minimum power. He aimed it at the head of the Juriaden and began to fire and gradually disintegrate the armor. Eventually he had the armor destroyed and forced the Juriaden to breath in some gas. Once Raymond was satisfied that the Juriaden was unconscious he put him inside the virtual glass containment field. Raymond sat back down in his chair, tractored the fighter and began the long journey back to the Taelon side of the front. He nearly fell asleep a few times, the only way he stayed awake was by hitting his injured arm. Once on the Taelon side he let the Juriaden ship drift away. Raymond turned on his ID drives and inhaled the gas. He would awaken when they were home.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 10, 2032

8:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

Hammer II

\*\*

\*\* \*\*Raymond awoke and knew right away that something was wrong. "Warning: Containment field breech is extremely likely." Raymond turned around and he saw the Juridan firing blasts of energy from his palms toward the containment field.

"Shit." Raymond grabbed his gun and pointed it at the Juridan, ready for when he breaks out of the field. The Juriaden stopped attacking the field. "Am I going to have to stand here and watch you the entire trip back?"

"Yes," he replied.

"How do you know my tongue?"

"I was once a prisoner of the Taelons, there were several human technicians nearby I learned to speak your language by listening to what they said."

"Well it looks like you are going to be a prisoner again."

"I will kill you first."

"Go ahead. This ship will come out of ID space right by the Taelon Mothership, they will easily overpower this ship if need be."

"They will not destroy it and kill you."

"Ya they would, Za'hor doesn't like me much and I don't like him either."

"Release me."

"Not likely."

"Why?"

"I have to bring you back. It is part of my mission. Za'hor threaten me with my life."

"So don't go back."

"There are dozens of devices that monitor my location and probably more onboard this ship, should I attempt to leave they will be able to follow me."

"Why do you fight for the Taelons."

"Like I said my life is forfeit should I change sides. Besides I don't think your people would want someone who destroyed an entire fleet and killed thousands."

"Your ship is amazingly powerful, that alone is a good enough reason."

"What would keep you from killing me?"

"Nothing."

"Why do you fight the Taelons?"

"Because they hunt us."

"What?"

"Yes, Taelons and Juridans were once one species but the Taelons altered their evolution to achieve spiritual perfection, whereas we did not. The Taelons no longer reproduce as a result and the one called Za'hor is the last Taelon ever born. We fight them because they wish to destroy us, and they believe that humanity will be the key to our destruction."

"It is."

"What!?"

"With human technology Taelon and Juridan energies may be combined, that is how this ship is possible. With the human technology your cloaking technology and weapons are fused with the Taelon shuttles. This has produced the most amazing ship as you are quite aware. Now I would like it if you stopped trying to escape, because there is now where to go." Raymond sat down and took some anesthetics from the medikit and put them in his arm again. Raymond spent a great deal of the return trip talking with the Juriaden about many topics and lightly dozing occasionally. Several hours into the trip Raymond ran out of anesthetics, luckily for him he was less than three hours from home.

"What is wrong with your arm," asked the Juridan when Raymond's anesthetic ran out.

"Simple, your friend shot me."

"And you are still alive."

"I dodged most of it."

"Even still a shot should easily kill a human."

"Then I am a very lucky human. Also how do you know what will and will not kill a human."

"Armies of humans are attacking some of our planets. I have personally killed hundreds of humans."

"Well I have personally killed thousands of Juriadens." The Juriaden snarled at Raymond.

"I will kill you."

"Za'hor probably will send me on another incredibly stupid and suicidal mission that will get me killed." Raymond and the Juriaden spent the rest of the trip quiet. Raymond pondered what he had done to the thousands of Juriadens. When they got home Raymond activated the comm. link to the Mothership. "Mission Successful," was all he

said.

"Congratulations Mr. Smite," replied Za'hor.

"The Juriaden prisoner did not stay asleep the entire trip and is awake currently, I suggest extreme care with him. He can speak English and claims to have been a prisoner before. Also I have been severely injured and need immediate medical attention."

"I will see that you receive it."

"Thank you. Could you assume flight control of the ship? I think if I turn around the Juriaden will try to kill me and I don't want to die after making it home."

"Assuredly."

"Thank you." The Hammer II was flown back into the Mothership. When he landed he was met by a very large force of heavily armed Volunteers, and several personnel from the Mothership as well as Sandoval, Za'hor, Da'on, Liam, many other Taelons and oddly the media. Raymond stepped out of the shuttle and as the Volunteers rushed by him he tripped and nearly fell, however Liam grabbed him and held him up. "Argggh, don't touch my arm. It is badly burned."

"Sorry," replied Liam. Raymond turned around to see what the Volunteers were doing about the Juriaden and saw that the Volunteers had shot him with a beam and was unconscious.

"Watch out he doesn't stay knocked out for long."

"We can handle it sir," replied one of the Volunteers.

"Just warning you."

"We can handle it sir." Liam lead the limping Raymond to a medical bay in the Mothership. The medics there sat him down and pulled off the bandage.

"Aaaaarrrrgggggggghhh."

"Sorry sir," said the medic. She reached over and placed a grayish round object on his upper arm and immediately the pain stopped.

"Thank you."

"What did you do to yourself," asked Liam

"I was nearly shot. It was only a glancing blow but as you can see it certainly was powerful. I probably would be dead had it hit me directly."

"Why were you shot," asked a reporter. Raymond looked over and saw the media standing outside the door.

"Excuse me, I am being treated I would like it if you went away. I am sure Za'hor has a conference planned."

"Will you be there," asked another media member.

"If I am able, now please leave me alone." Liam walked up to the door.

"You heard the man he has had enough for now." And then he shut the door and turned around and said: "You aren't very diplomatic."

"Saves time that way."

"I can imagine." The medic continued to treat Raymond.

"Sir this wound is very bad and it will take some time to heal even with the best treatment available. Also it may not heal perfectly."

"Exactly how long and what do you many be not heal perfectly, '"

"Perhaps several months and you will bear a very nasty scar."

"What is a few months to a man over a hundred and thirty years old? Besides I already have several scars, like the one on my back when pieces of shrapnel were lodged in me." The medic finished treating Raymond and said that he would have to take several medicines everyday and come to the Mothership every other week to insure that his arm was healing correctly. Liam lead Raymond out and to a small room with Za'hor where he received a fast debriefing and was then lead out to have a media conference.

The media asked pretty much the same questions as Za'hor and what they learned about the mission was simple. Raymond had gone out on a modified shuttle to see if the Taelons were really sensing a species (with technology) comparable to them was true and when he got there, there was a small hostile fleet. Raymond had managed to destroy most of the fleet with the weapons on board his ship and captured a fighter craft and its pilot. Raymond had left the craft in the hands of a Taelon vessel and it was currently being analyzed. After this Raymond went home to Nevada.

\*\*

Tuesday, March 10, 2032

11:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

Nevada

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\*\*\*Raymond went to sleep and when he awoke he talked to Bob on his Global. "Hey Bob."

"How are you?"

"Fine besides nearly losing half my arm."

"Well I did find some very interesting things out while you were gone."

"Such as."

"Augar is definitely part of the Resistance."

"Not very interesting, what else did you find."

"Well so is Liam, in fact he is the head and so is Magret Blake."

"What!? Liam, he doesn't seem like the type. Isn't Magret Blake the CEO or something of Doors international, the company that is strongly allied with the Taelons."

"Ya she is."

"Amazing, how could Liam be part of the Resistance, nothing in his personality gives it away. Isn't it a little hypocritical for a member of the Resistance to protect a Taelon."

"Yes it is, but he is. I imagine that there is more to his story they we will ever know."

"Not if I can help it. I think I will go pay a little visit to Liam, when he is in Augar's place and confront him about this."

"He's there right now."

"How do you know?"

"I bugged the place."

"Wow, that isn't like you. I always though you preferred hacking."

"Change happens, though I did hack his computers too."

"That it does. Bye Bob." Raymond shut off his Global and used one of the temporary ID portals to go to Alaska. From there the went to his house in Hawaii, then topside after changing to catch a portal to New York City.

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Wednesday, March 11, 2032

8:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

New York

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Raymond went down to Augar's place and when he reached the rock wall, he used a small sample of Liam's DNA to open the door. When he went down the corridor Liam came out of the hallway with a gun raised at him. "Now Liam it would be bad to do something that you might regret later."

"How did you get down here."

"Your DNA. I also know that you are the leader of the Resistance, and Magret Blake is another leading officer."

"I am not in the Resistance."

"Yes you are. An associate looked through Augar's files and found a great deal of incrementing evidence, perhaps I will go to Za'hor with this information." Liam tightened his grip on the gun and fired. The shot would have killed Raymond except that in his very large backpack he had one of the many virtual glass projectors. The blast bounced harmlessly off the shield. "Now why don't you stop that or I will shoot back." Raymond had drawn his gun from the backpack. "You know I could cut a hole down to Augar's place from here with this, or I could cut a hole up, leave and tell Za'hor about what you do in your free time." Liam lowered his gun. "Now that you see where you stand, let us go down and see Augar." Liam stepped in to the elevator followed by Raymond who placed his gun against Liam's back and his finger on the trigger. "Move and you will die." They went down into Augar's home. When they got down Raymond was confronted by Augar with a gun. "Put that away, you don't even know how to use it and I can easily kill both of you in a single shot."

"He really can, the gun he has could cut a hole to the surface if he wanted," said Liam. Augar put down the gun. Raymond walked forward, kicked the gun away and sat down in a couch. He kept his gun and backpack nearby.

"Now I am sure that you are curious as to why I am here and how I knew this place existed. Well that is very simple, I have come here because my good friend, I believe you know him Augar, Bob has told me that Liam is in the Resistance."

"Bob, you mean you work with that manic," said Augar.

"If anyone is the manic it would be me," said Raymond. "He hacked your computer and I will bet my life on the fact that right now he is watching us."

"I might not just respond for that bet," said a hologram with Bob's voice.

"Can't you make it look like you? I find it rather odd to hear your voice coming from a woman's mouth," asked Raymond.

"Sure hold on a second." The image blurred and a second later was replaced by Bob's face. "That better."

"How did you get in my systems," asked Augar.

"That was easy, your systems are good but are definitely no match for the USC," said Bob.

"USC," asked Liam and Augar.

"The Unhackable super computer. It is the most powerful computer in the world and only Bob and I know how to build it," replied Raymond.

"Wow," said Augar.

"Yes, well after I went to your place I hacked your computer, found a great deal of interesting things about you and Liam, and using the bug in the couch I recorded your talking about the Resistance. There is definitely enough evidence to prove you both, and many others, guilty of opposing the Taelons."

"Why haven't you turned us in yet," asked Liam.

"Don't want to," said Raymond.

"I also would rather join you then fight you," said Bob.

"Wow, really Bob. I never knew," said Raymond.

"Yes well after some of the things that I read in the Taelon files and archives I am more than willing to help you, even if you don't trust me."

"You have full access to all Taelon files," asked an astonished Augar.

"Yes of course."

"That would be a very useful tool," said Augar.

"They could be letting you in purposely," said Liam.

"I don't exist anywhere. They don't know I exist, no computer file has held information on me since I was imprisoned. Nothing exists about me."

"That is true, I couldn't even find anything about him," said Augar. Raymond, Augar, Bob, and Liam argued for several hours about letting Bob and Raymond into the Resistance. Eventually Raymond allowed Liam to call Margret Blake and ask for her opinion. After a while it seemed like they had concluded that Bob and Raymond could enter, but on the condition that they performed one act of loyalty-to destroy a secret Taelon base with the weapons onboard the Hammer II. After this Raymond left and said he would perform the act later tomorrow after the full debriefing with Za'hor. When he left he felt like no one in the room had believed that he would do what was asked. It felt like they thought he was a potential traitor and should be eliminated.

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Thursday, March 12, 2032

8:30 AM Eastern Standard Time

Taelon Mothership

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The debriefing was extremely intensive and long. Raymond was forced to explain virtually every action he had done, especially decloaking and trying to draw the fighter craft toward him.

"I didn't know that I would be able to destroy all the small craft, you never told me that the weapon was capable of destroying a

planet," said Raymond in response as to why he had decloaked to draw the fighter craft in.

"It couldn't, the computer was programmed to hit all of the targets not just one at a time," said Za'hor.

"I reprogrammed the computer."

"Oh. The Juridan tells us that you don't like me much and are only helping because I offered to kill you."

"That is partially true. I don't like you and you seem not to like me much either. I do serve you because you offered to kill me but that isn't the only reason, the other is that I need a job and this will be the ultimate thrill ride, the best job and missions I could ever hope for are at hand." Za'hor seemed very surprised at what he said but made no further reply on the subject. The debriefing lasted until nearly nightfall on Earth. When it was done Raymond went off to destroy the hidden Taelon base.

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Thursday, March 12, 2032

7:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

Hammer II

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As Raymond left the Mothership and entered ID space he felt a brief moment of fear. This was all the warning he had, because as soon as he entered ID space the ride became very bumpy. The ship was jostled around and when he came out of ID space it was in a stray sky very, very, very far from Earth. "Computer where are we," asked a frightened Raymond.

"Unknown, no star formations are recognized, and all star formations in every point

of the universe are cataloged in this ship's memory."

"What how is that possible."

"The ID drives have malfunctioned, this once happened to Liam Koncade and he was sent to a parallel Earth where the first Taelon Ma'el never came."

"Why did the drives malfunction?"

"There is a small radiation leak between the weapon systems and the ID drives, the Juridan energy must have caused the drives to malfunction."

"Was it caused or an accident?"

"It could be either."

"Can I go back home?"

"No attempting to do so because with damaged ID drives will cause the destruction to this craft." Raymond spent the next few hours searching the area for any life. He didn't find none. He was lost, lonely, and likely to die because of starvation. Eventually his grief subsided and he fell asleep. Raymond hoped he would either die in his sleep or wake up and find it a dream. When he did awake, he had a very, very long lifetime of frightening adventures with many new species.

End  
file.